

New Wine

*It takes a crazy sunshine like today
and a dry Cinzano to make me laugh.
Running smiles, decorous whispers,
eyes saying "Yes," what waiting lies in between!
The half-stolen earring, a link between two hands,
a bridge from banter to warmer music,
what softness my hands find beneath that blouse!
Your cautious sips are counterpointed
with my deliberate longer swallowings.
This new richness needs time to age,
to acquire the bouquet that comes
with the spilling of inhibitions.
Secrets taste sharp as cheddar;
you are the wine to smooth my tongue.*

After My Death

*take my bones
high into the moist greenness of New Hampshire
put them in a canvas bag
and place the bag on a birchwood platform
raised in the sweet-smelling meadow

light four fires
one at each corner of the primitive bier
then sit through the night
to the left facing north mumbling
prayers we created in love

when morning comes
don't be frightened by the noise from the platform
the bones will rattle
as my soul my spirit my body
reunite*

-- Ottone M. Riccio

Belmont, Mass.